

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2023

Tom Vilsack
Secretary
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Stacy Dean
Deputy Under Secretary for USDA's Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Cindy Long
Administrator
USDA Food and Nutrition Service
Braddock Metro Center II
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Secretary Vilsack, Deputy Under Secretary Dean, and Administrator Long:

We write regarding the State of Texas's failure to comply with federal requirements concerning the processing of applications for food assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Federal law requires States to process SNAP applications and recertifications within 30 days, a requirement Texas has failed to meet since July 2021. We strongly urge you to immediately find Texas out of compliance with application processing time requirements and proceed directly to corrective action procedures under 7 CFR 276.4(d).

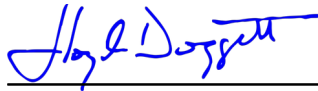
As of September 1st, vulnerable families were waiting over 100 days to have their applications assigned to an eligibility worker for review. State employees have expressed their deep concern in the enclosed whistleblower letter that these delays are likely to exceed 200 days by year-end. One-third of SNAP applicants are now facing substantial delays—well beyond federal requirements of a 95% application processing success rate. Thousands of Texans are left without food for months as these backlogs persist and worsen.

These families require immediate assistance, yet they are left in limbo for months as parents struggle to figure out how they will feed their children and are forced to make difficult tradeoffs between paying rent, utility bills, gas, and more. These delays are also increasing pressure on local food banks, nonprofits, and religious charitable organizations working to supplement these gaps with limited resources.

Nearly 3.5 million Texans received SNAP benefits last year and 79% of participants were in families with children. The long-term health and wellbeing of these children are in jeopardy as food assistance delays exacerbate the childhood hunger and poverty crisis that plagues our State and Nation. Texas ranks 45th in the Nation for child wellbeing and 20% of Texas children live below the poverty line and in hunger, disproportionately Latino and African American children. Timely access to food assistance is critical to alleviating this crisis and reducing inequities.

This situation is worsening by the day under Governor Abbott's indifferent leadership. Please act now to protect the health and livelihood of our most vulnerable and marginalized neighbors.

Sincerely,



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



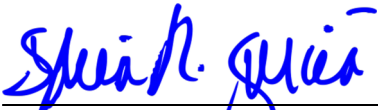
Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



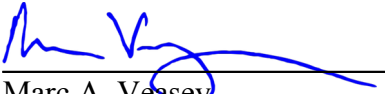
Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress